

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 04427 250959Z POSS DUPE
ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 VO-03
SCA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INSE-00 SY-05 DEAE-00 /042 W
-----251311Z 098556 /46

R 250900Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7590
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, VS, JA
SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE BOAT CASE: JAPANESE REFUSE VIETNAMESE
REFUGEES ABOARD FAIRSHIP

REF: HONG KONG 3331

1. MANILA AGENT FOR LIBERIAN REGISTERED FREIGHTER FAIRSHIP HAS
BEEN KEEPING BLATTER (UNHCR REP) INFORMED OF STATUS OF 14 VIET-
NAMESE REFUGEES (SEE REFTEL). REFUGEES WERE TAKEN ABOARD FAIRSHIP

(LOCATION NOT CERTAIN) ON MARCH 5. SHIP WAS THEN ENROUTE TO
JAPAN. SHIP'S MASTER IS REPORTEDLY A FILIPINO. EVENTS IN JAPAN
REPORTED REFTEL. SHIP THEN DEPARTED JAPAN WITH COLOMBO AS
EVENTUAL DESTINATION.

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2. UPON HEARING OF DIFFICULTIES IN JAPAN, BLATTER BEGAN TO EXPLORE
POSSIBILITIES OF OFFLOADING REFUGEES IN PHILIPPINES. IT WAS SOON
APPARENT THAT DECISION WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM FONSECY ROMULO
HIMSELF. BLATTER ASKED FOR AND WAS GRANTED INTERVIEW WITH
ROMULO ON MARCH 24. BLATTER OUTLINED PROBLEM AND INDICATED
UNHCR WILLING TO PROVIDE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF REFUGEE GROUP.
BLATTER REVIEW EFFORTS OF UNITED STATES, FRANCE, CANADA,

AND OTHER NATIONS IN PROVIDING RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. ROMULO APPEARED FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH EXTENT OF TURNOVER OF REFUGEES IN JOSE FABELLA CENTER AND WITH PROSPECT OF CONTINUED ASSISTANCE. HE THEN AGREED THAT GROUP WOULD BE PERMITTED TO LAND IN PHILIPPINES. THE FAIRSHIP IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN MANILA EVENING OF MARCH 25.

3. COMMENT: (A) BROAD GOP POLICY ON BOAT CASE REFUGEES HAS STARTED FROM PREMISE THAT GOP WILL NOT RPT NOT ACCEPT REFUGEES. AS CIVILIZED NATION, HOWEVER, GOP WILL ACT IN HUMANITARIAN WAY AND NOT REFUSE ENTRY OF REFUGEES WHO ARRIVE IN SMALL BOATS WHICH ARE UNSEAWORTHY AND WHICH COULD NOT MAKE IT SUCCESSFULLY TO ANOTHER COUNTRY. GOP DECISION TO TAKE FAIRSHIP REFUGEES IS THEREFORE ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE. SHIP WAS NOT OF PHILIPPINE REGISTRY. NEXT PORT OF CALL WAS IN JAPAN, NOT PHILIPPINES. IN FACT, SHIP HAD NEVER INTENDED TO STOP IN PHILIPPINES. GOP THEREFORE HAD NO OBLIGATION TO TAKE REFUGEES AND HAD AMPLE GROUNDS TO REFUSE THEM. BLATTER EXTENDED HIS SINCERE APPRECIATION TO ROMULO IN DECISION TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO LAND HERE.

(B) IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT ROMULO'S POSITIVE ACTION IN THIS CASE WAS MOTIVATED, AT LEAST IN PART, BY DESIRE TO ENHANCE GOP'S "HUMAN RIGHTS" IMAGE IN THE LIGHT OF INCREASED USG EMPHASIS THIS AREA.

(C) WE SHARE HONG KONG'S VIEW THAT IT COULD BE USEFUL TO ASK UNHCR TO STRESS TO GOJ THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN BOAT REFUGEE PROBLEMS. END COMMENT
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

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Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, SEA RESCUES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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